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ROGER SALICK • TIM VIGIL • DENIS RODIER

BADGER



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T.VIGIL 89

BADGER™

CREATED BY MIKE BARON

A self-styled crime fighter who rides the highways and by-ways of America, the **Badger** metes out bloody justice to jaywalkers, ticket scalpers, indifferent teenaged fast-food clerks, in fact, *any-damn-body he feels like because he's CRAZY!*

Badger is just one side of **Norbert Sykes**, a Vietnam veteran with a personality problem: It's split seven ways. Nevertheless, Norbert almost always finds himself in a Badger state of mind.

Badger is a master of Shorin-ryu and dozens of other obscure, esoteric, arcane, not to mention abstruse martial arts. He can also talk to the animals — just like Dr. Doolittle. Only with better results.

Badger lives with **Ham the Weather Wizard** in a castle south of Barneveld, Wisconsin. Ham and Badger met while both were inmates at a state mental hospital. Through cunning and chicanery, Ham has amassed a considerable fortune.

Badger calls everyone Larry.

Last Issue: Badger and Mavis went to Bolivia to study the medicinal uses of donkey dung, but ended up in the middle of the *Tinku*, a ritual fist-fight between two villages.

In **Badger Goes Berserk #3:** Badger delves deeper into the roots of his madness, and Mavis and Larry, Badger's stepfather, have a frank discussion. A special jam issue.

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A FIRST COMICS PUBLISHING PRODUCTION



ANCIENT BABYLON, 2000 B.C.

OMPH, CIM!
CIM, MY HANDSOME
ONE...THERE IS MORE
TO YOU THAN MEETS
THE EYE. YOU ARE
A MIGHTY
LOVER.

WHAT FOOL WOULD
NOT BE, FAIR SHAZA?
YOU MAKE A MAN'S
BLOOD BOIL...

IN AN'S NAME, I
HAVE NEVER BEEN SO BOLDLY
PURSUED.

BE CAREFUL,
LOVER. SPEAK NOT
OF RIGHTEOUS GODS
TO THE PRIESTESS OF
THE BLACK DOOR
DO YOU FORGET WHERE
YOU ARE?

NAY...I KNOW I
LIE ATOP YOUR DARK
TEMPLE, AND AM
UNAIDED. TELL ME,
SHAZA, WHY DID YOU
MAKE ME WAIT
SEVEN FULL DAYS
TO BED YOU?

PERHAPS
I CRAVE THE
ELIXIR OF
THE FULL
MOON...

BEHIND THE Black Door

PART I





WHEN I SLIT YOUR THROAT, AND GIVE YOUR BLOOD TO ZABALA!

GOOD OLD ZABALA...



AN SAVE US! THE BLACK PRIESTESS HAS MADE GOOD HER BOAST! ZABALA IS ASCENDING!

WHERE ARE THE PRIESTS OF AN? CAN THEY DO NOTHING?

YOU! YOU ARE A PRIEST OF AN! DO SOMETHING BEFORE SHAZAMAR DEVOURS THIS WORLD!



LET ME PASS! I AM ON MY WAY TO THE TEMPLE OF AN!

THERE IS NO TIME FOR YOU TO GO WANDERING, PRIEST! LOOK AT THE SKY! THE BLACK DOOR CREAKS ON ITS HINGES!



AN SAVE US, YOU MAY BE RIGHT...

QUICKLY! THERE IS ONLY ONE THING THAT MAY WORK! JOIN HANDS AND BE SILENT WHILE I SING...



...YBAYMGN!
VAHERUOY
ESUAC...

WHAT STRANGE WORDS, PRIEST! IS THIS SOME FORGOTTEN SPEECH OF CONJURERS?

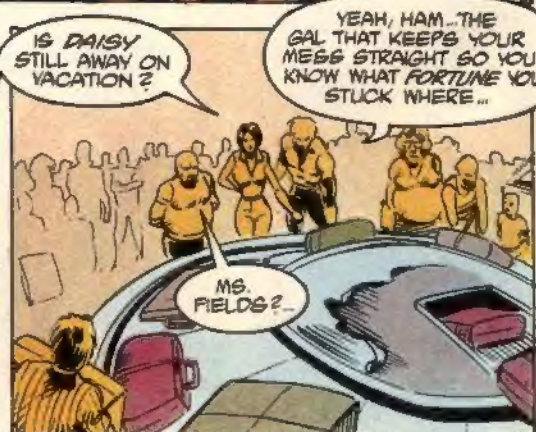
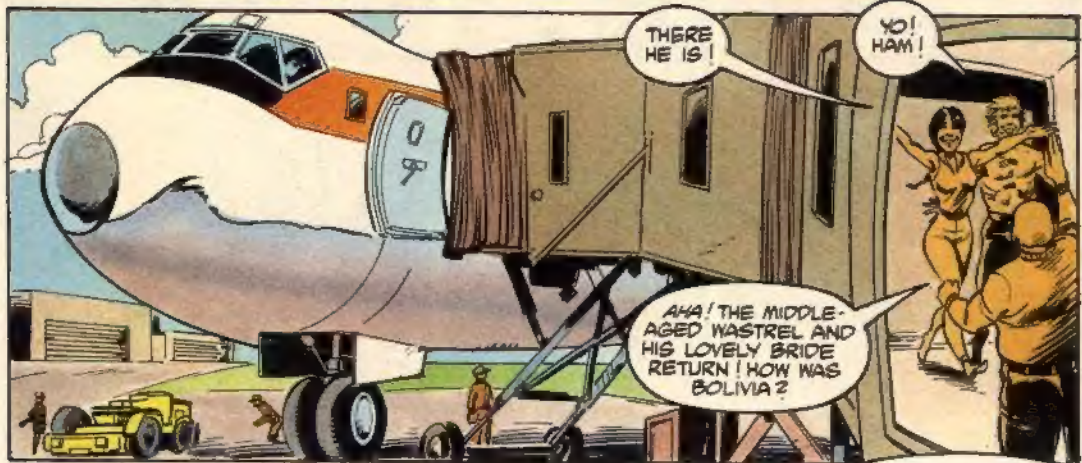
HARDLY. IT IS THE WORST BALLAD OF OUR TIME, SUNG BACKWARDS.

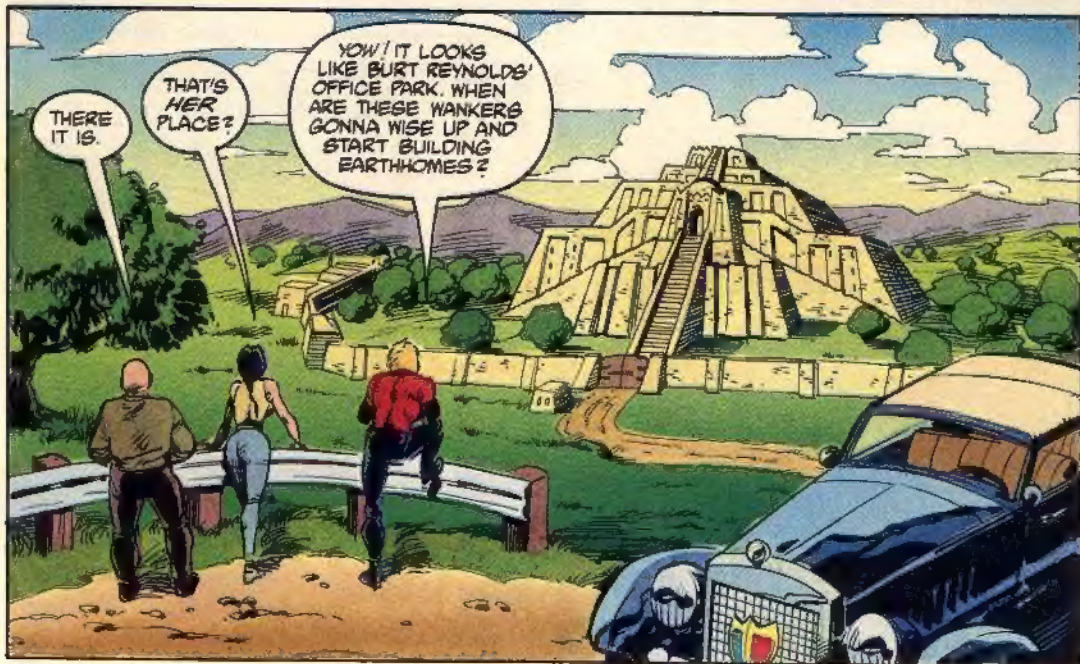
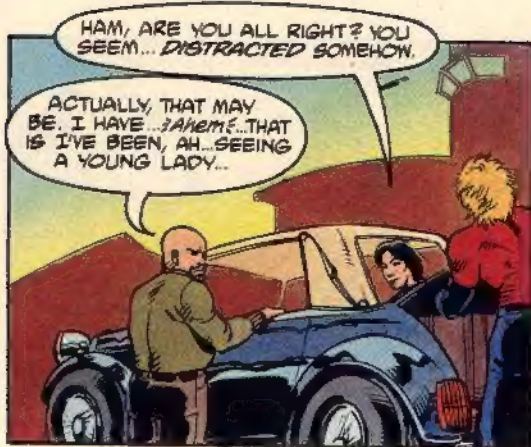
ARE YOU MAD?! WHAT DOES THIS DO?

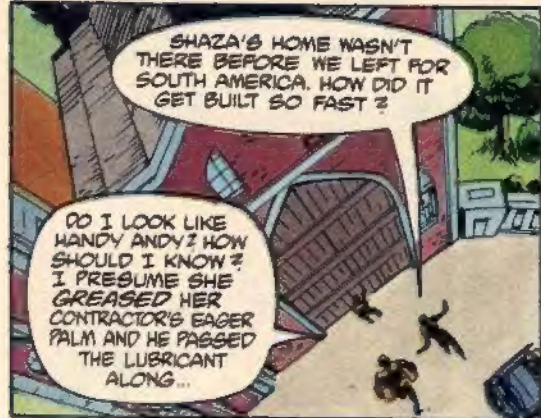
NO ONE CAN BE SURE, BUT IT IS SUPPOSED TO SUMMON THE FIST OF AN...











SHAZA'S HOME WASN'T THERE BEFORE WE LEFT FOR SOUTH AMERICA. HOW DID IT GET BUILT SO FAST?

DO I LOOK LIKE HANDY ANDY? HOW SHOULD I KNOW? I PRESUME SHE GREASED HER CONTRACTOR'S EAGER PALM AND HE PASSED THE LUBRICANT ALONG...



THERE'S SOMETHING FISHY ABOUT THIS PLACE. I CAN FEEL IT.

YEAH... IT'S A HEAT WASTER...



WE'VE GOT TO MEET THIS MAR WOMAN.

HOW COME?



BECAUSE I DON'T TRUST HER.

WHAT'S TO TRUST? YOU DON'T EVEN KNOW HER.

WELL, THAT HOUSE, FOR ONE THING. HOW MANY PEOPLE DO YOU KNOW WHO LIVE IN A PYRAMID?



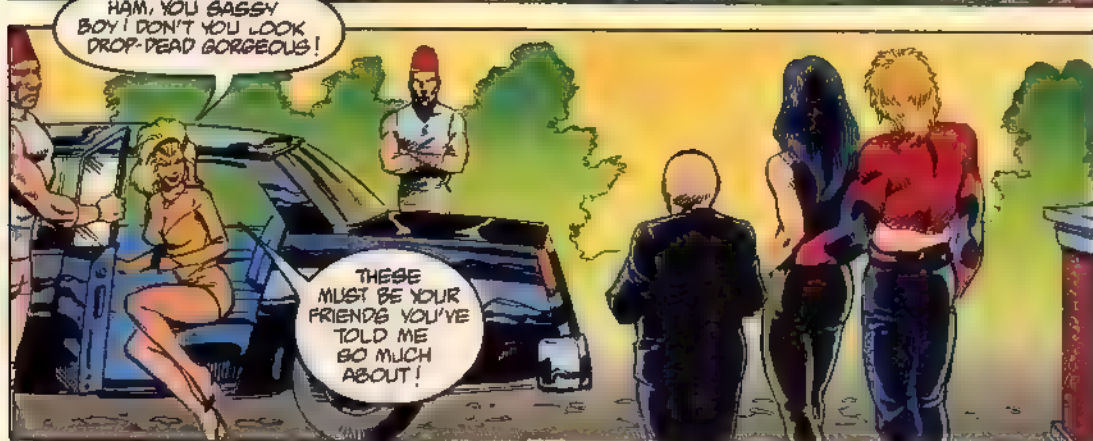
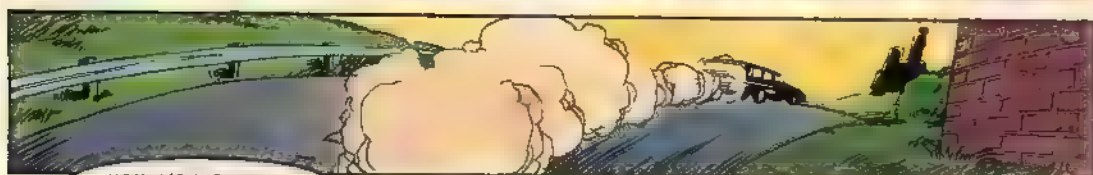
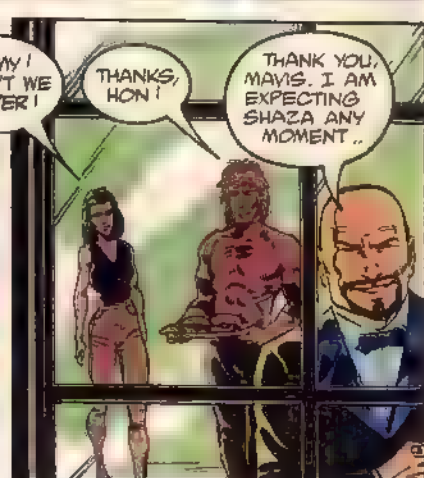
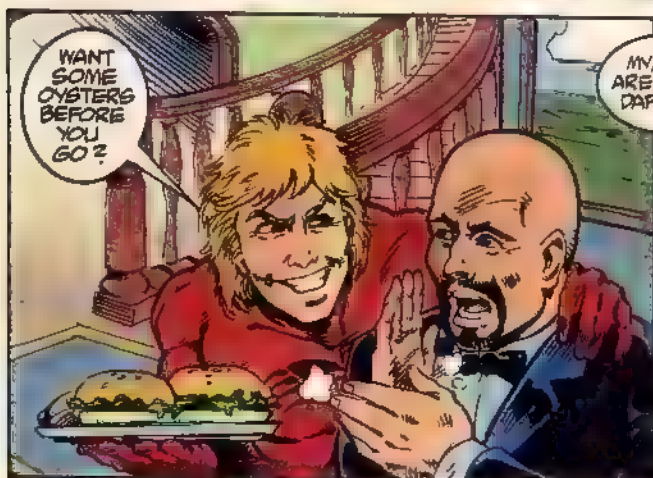
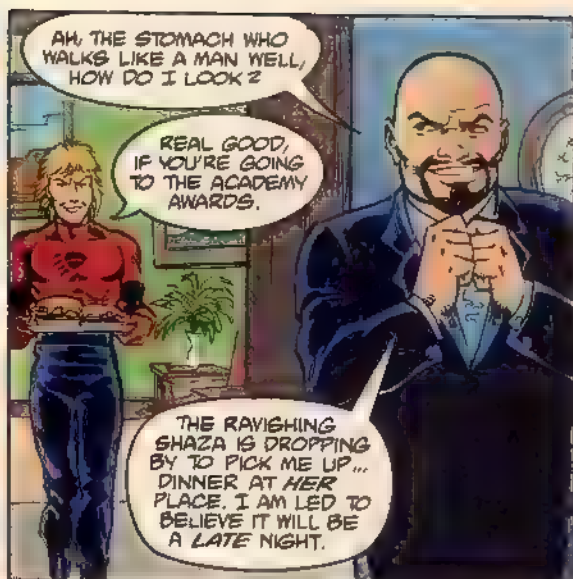
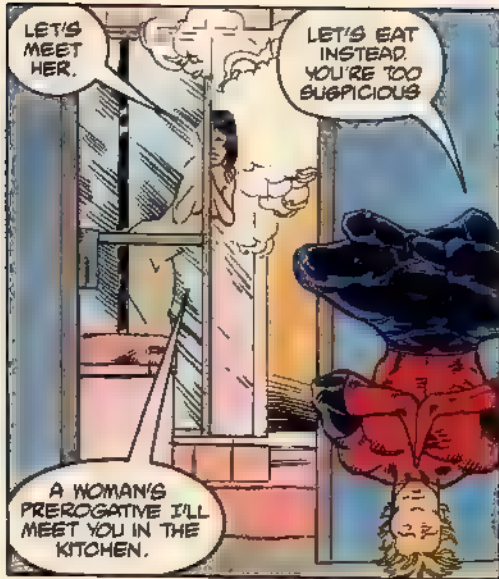
TAIN'T NO PYRAMID. THAT'S A FULL-BODIED ZAGGURAT... LIKE A PYRAMID, ONLY WITH A LOT OF KINKS IN ITS SPINE...

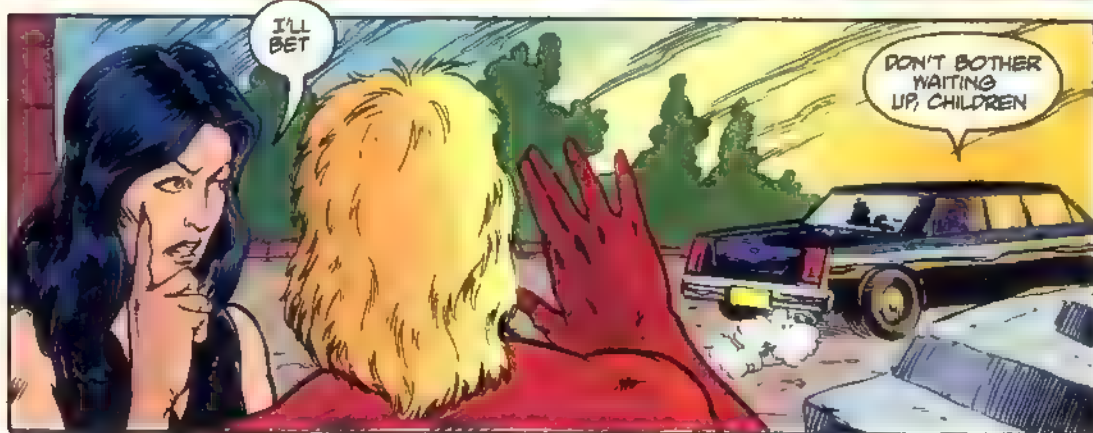
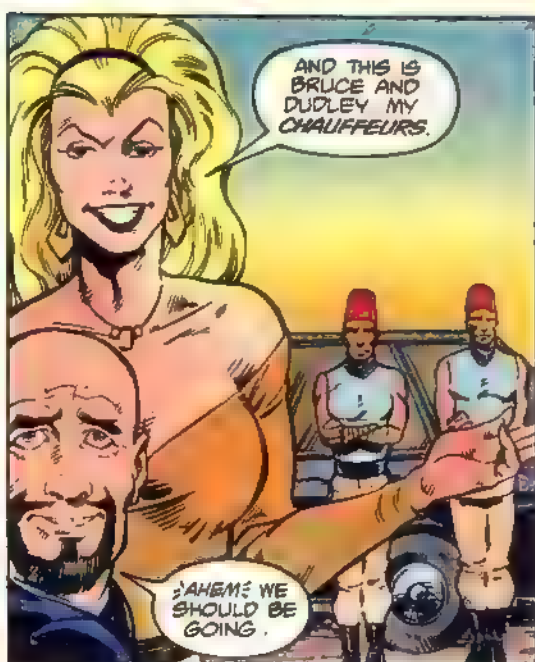
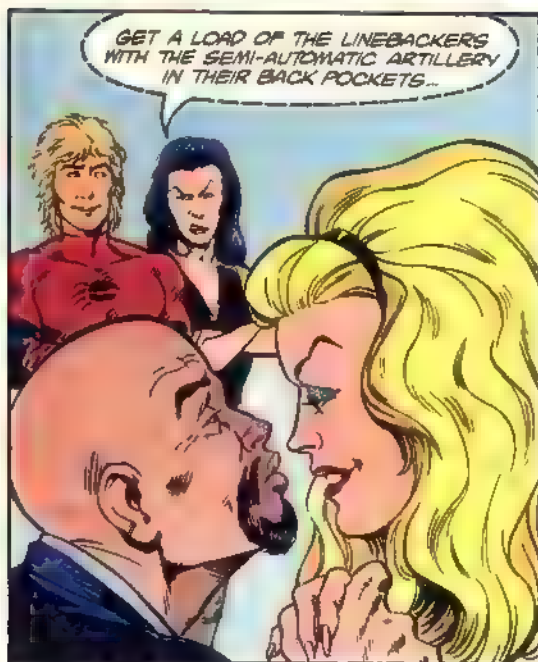
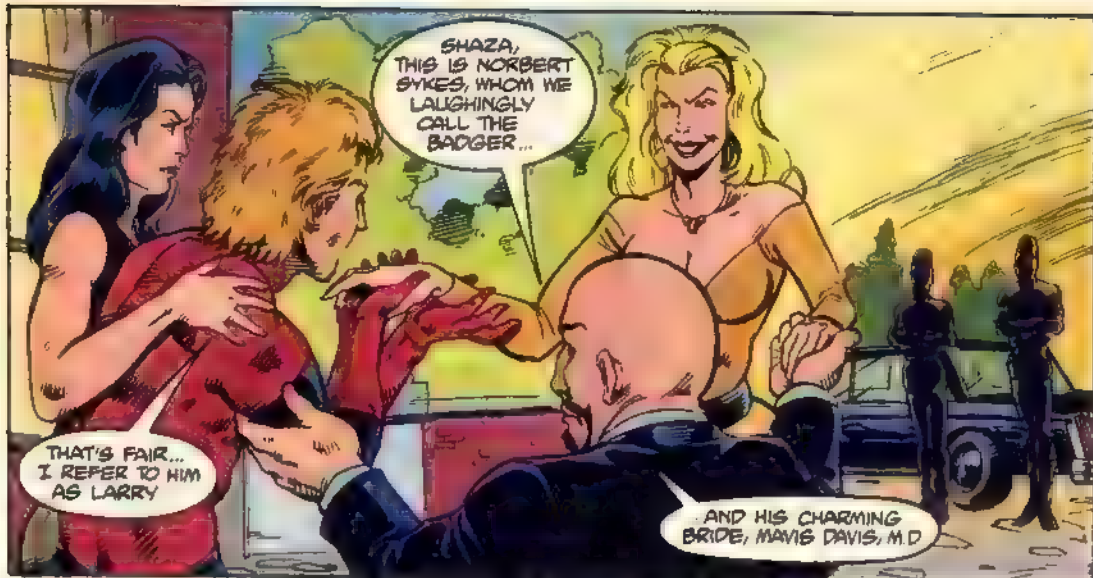
WHATEVER. HOW DID IT GET BUILT IN A COUPLE OF WEEKS, HMM?

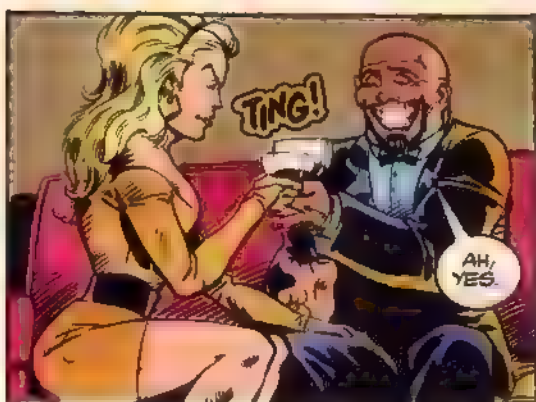
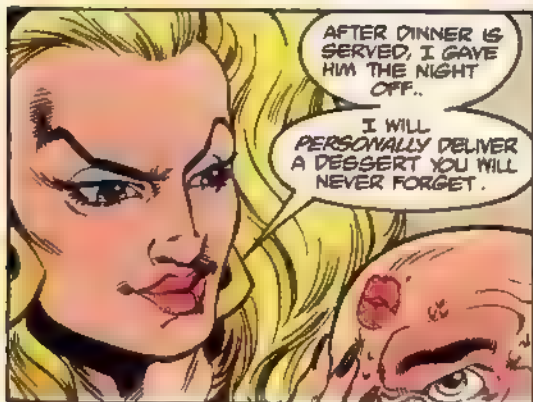
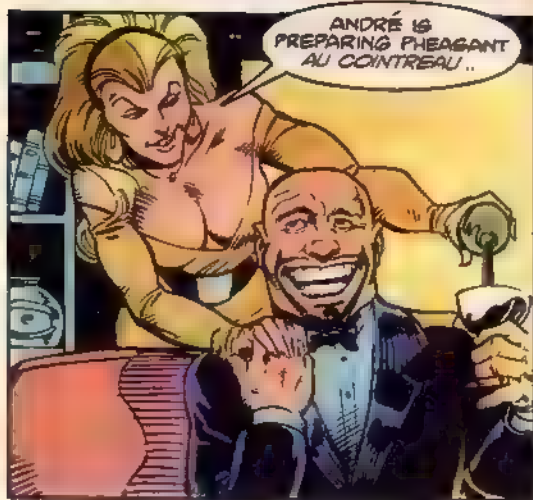
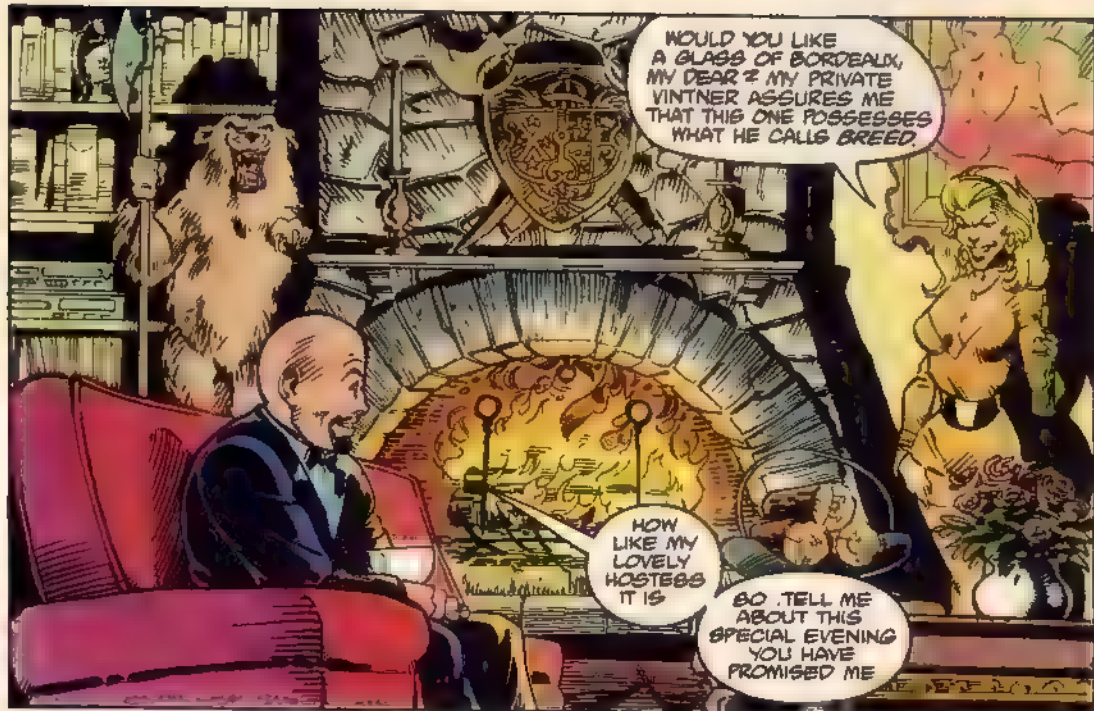
AND WHY'D SHE LATCH ON TO HAM?

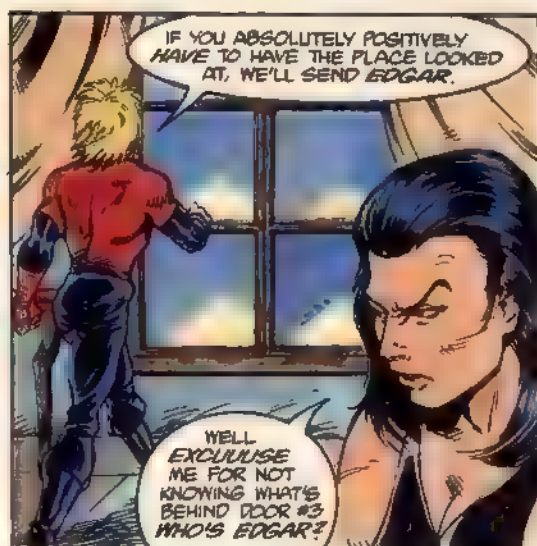
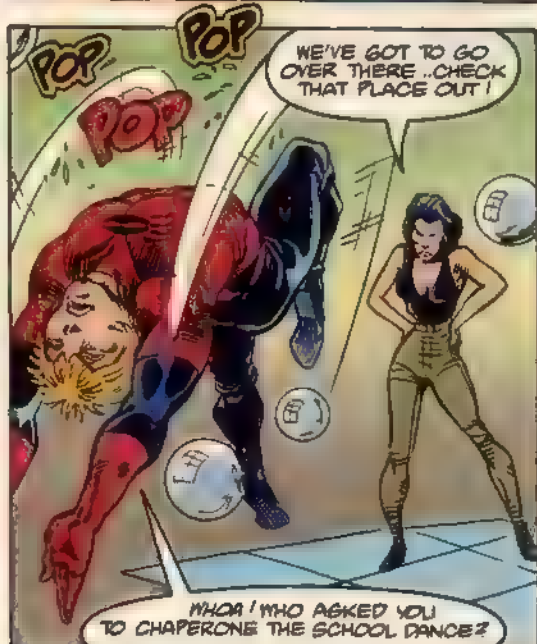
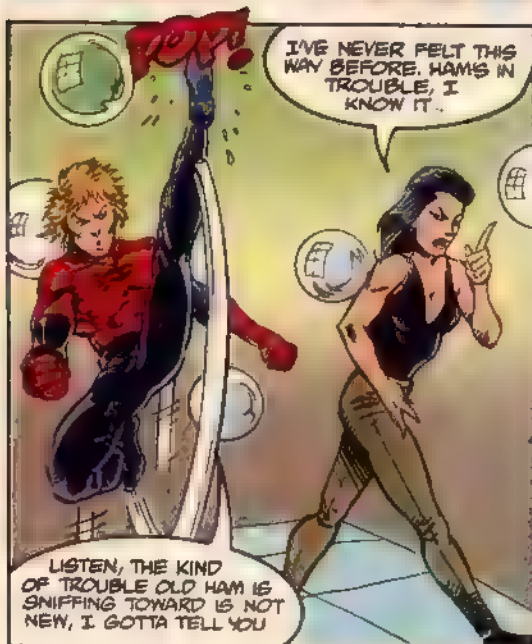
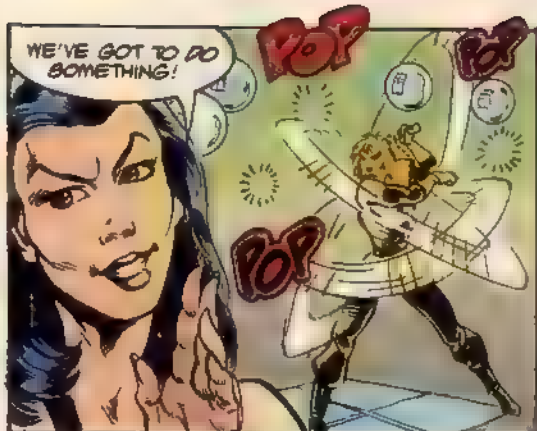
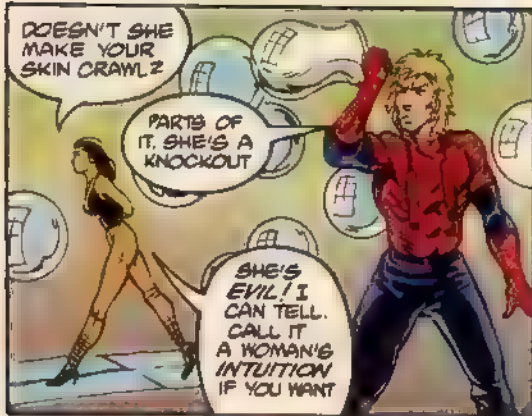


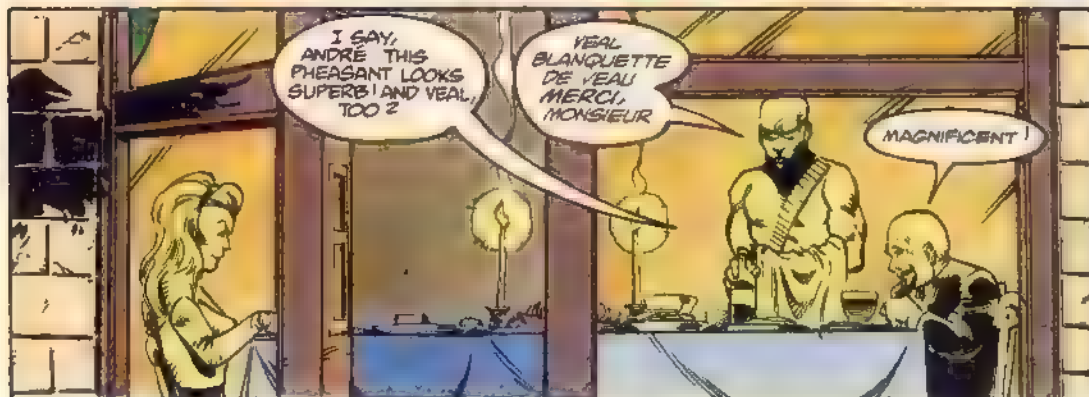
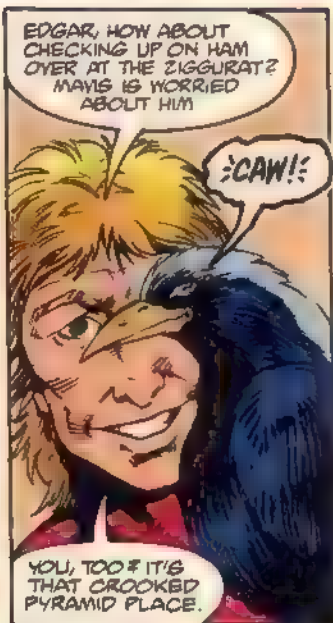
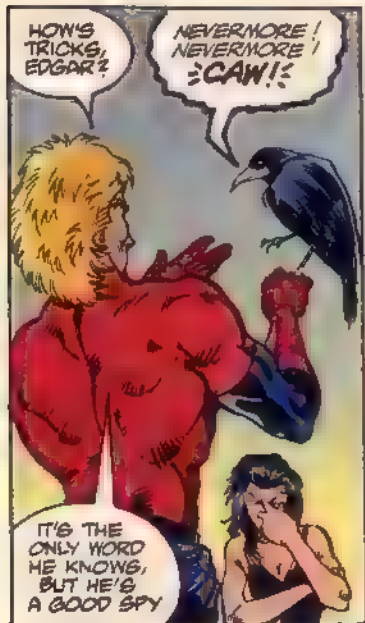
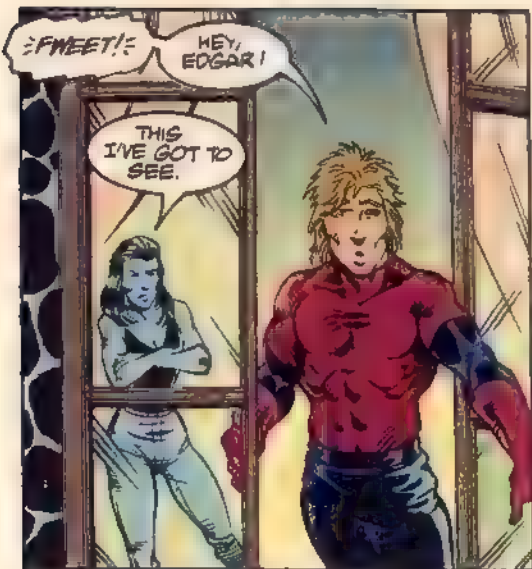
YOU MIGHT HAVE SOMETHING THERE. HE'S UGLY AND TALKS FUNNY... NO LADY KILLER...

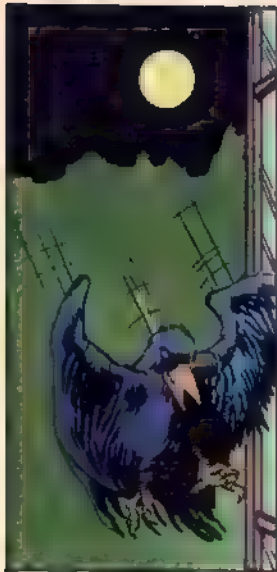




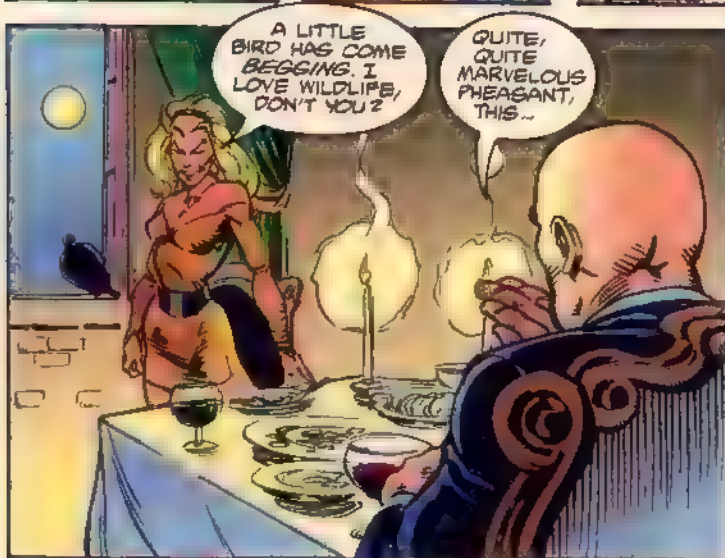








HAM, WOULD YOU EXCUSE ME FOR A MOMENT?

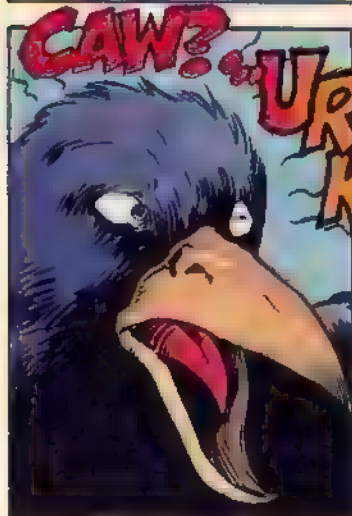


A LITTLE BIRD HAS COME BEGGING. I LOVE WILDLIFE, DON'T YOU?

QUITE, QUITE MARVELOUS PHEASANT, THIS...



CAW!



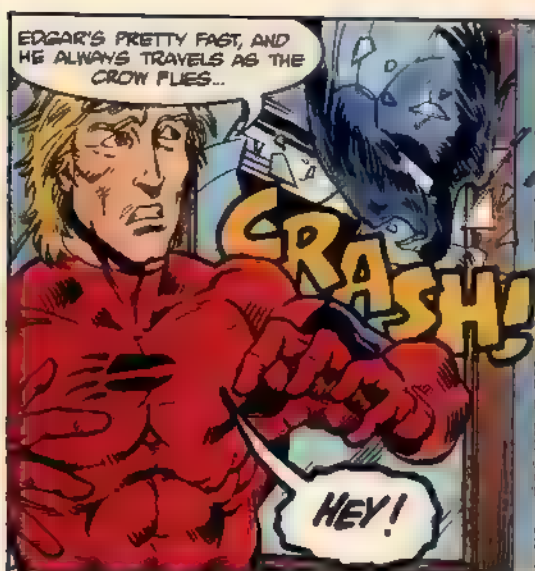
CAW? UR K!





HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE YOUR BIRD? I'VE STILL GOT THIS REAL BAD FEELING, YOU KNOW

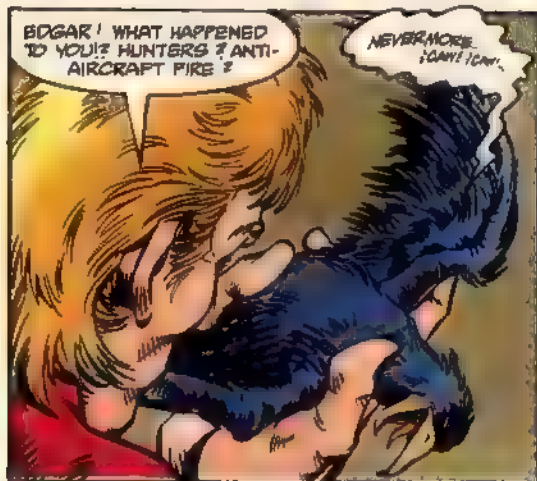
I KNOW, I KNOW! GIVE EDGAR A LITTLE TIME, WILL YOU? THESE COVERT OPERATIONS DON'T HAPPEN IN THE BLINK OF AN EYE, HEY



EDGAR'S PRETTY FAST, AND HE ALWAYS TRAVELS AS THE CROW FLIES...

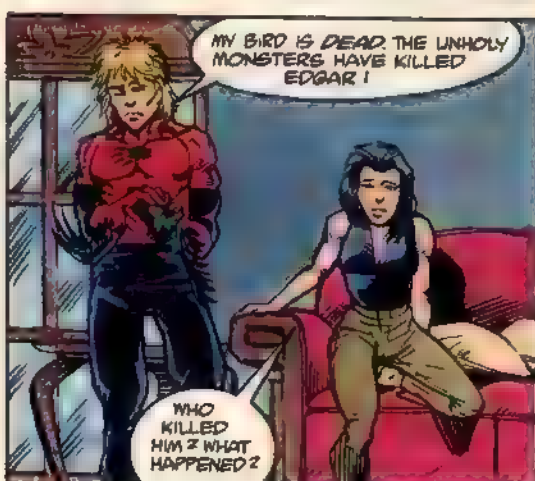
CRASH!

HEY!



EDGAR! WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU? HUNTERS? ANTI-AIRCRAFT FIRE?

NEVERMORE
:GAW! GAW!



MY BIRD IS DEAD. THE UNHOLY MONSTERS HAVE KILLED EDGAR!

WHO KILLED HIM? WHAT HAPPENED?



DAMN IF YOU WEREN'T RIGHT, MAVIS. SOMETHING'S UP THAT SHAZA BROAD FED EDGAR POISON YUMMIES



WELL, WHAT DO YOU WANT TO DO ABOUT IT?

WE'RE GOING TO STOP SCREWING AROUND AND DO WHAT I'VE BEEN SAYING ALL ALONG! WE'RE GOING TO CHECK OUT THIS PLACE OURSELVES!



YEAH.. WHEN THE MOON
HITS YOUR EYE LIKE A BIGGA
PIZZA PIE IT'S TIME TO DRAG
OUT THE PATENTED NINJA
STEALTH TECHNIQUES, OR
YOU'LL STAND OUT LIKE A
LAWN STATUE
UNDER A SPOT LIGHT.

YOU BREAK IN AND
TAKE A LOOK AROUND
WHILE I KEEP THE
GUARDS BUSY



FAIR ENOUGH
WE WON'T
ALERT HAM
UNTIL WE
KNOW WHAT'S
GOING ON

MIGHT AS
WELL MAKE
IT LOOK LIKE
A THEFT
GRAB SOME
TRINKETS FOR
EDGAR'S WIDOW



SOUNDS
GOOD

SHH!



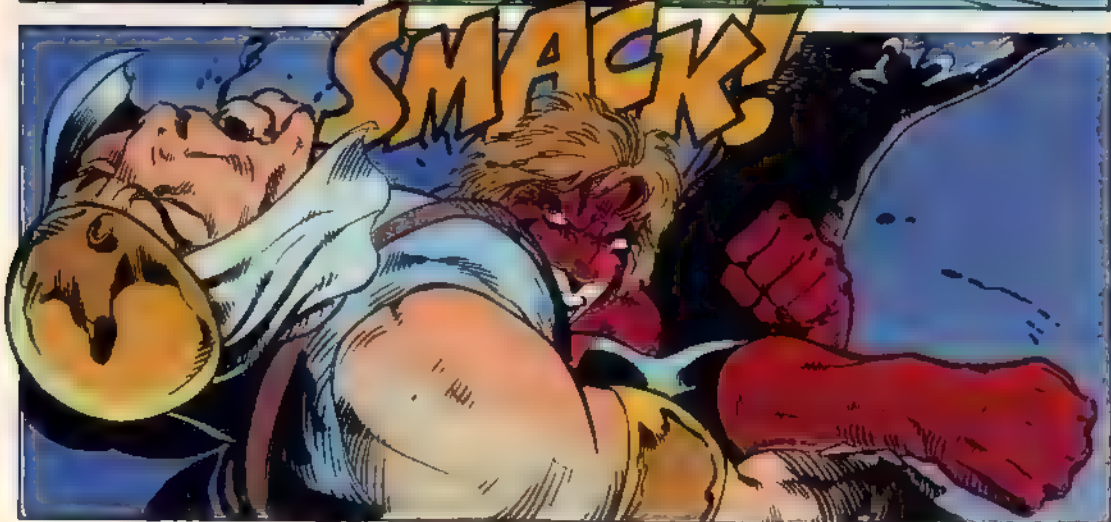
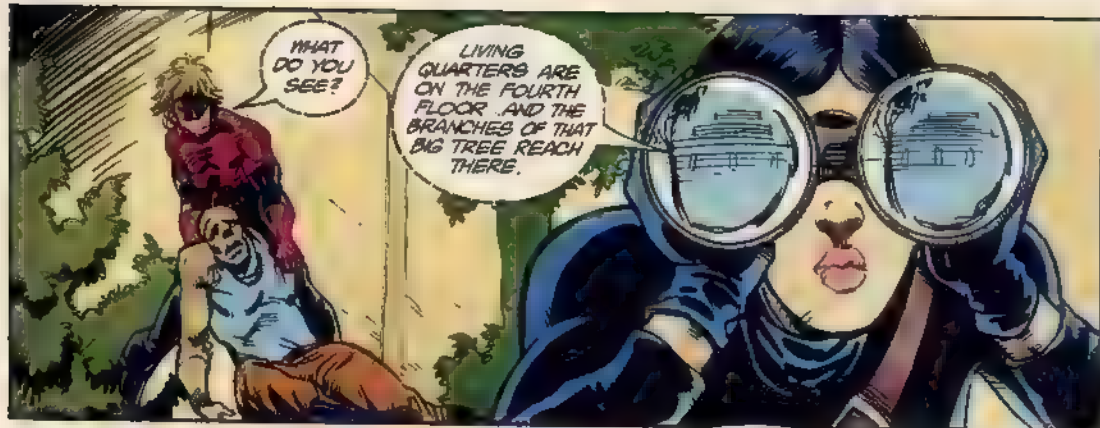
WHADDAYA
MEAN, SHH?
I'M A CAT, A
WRAITH IN
THE NIGHT!
I'VE READ
EVERY
STEPHEN K
HAYES BOOK
EVER
WRITTEN.

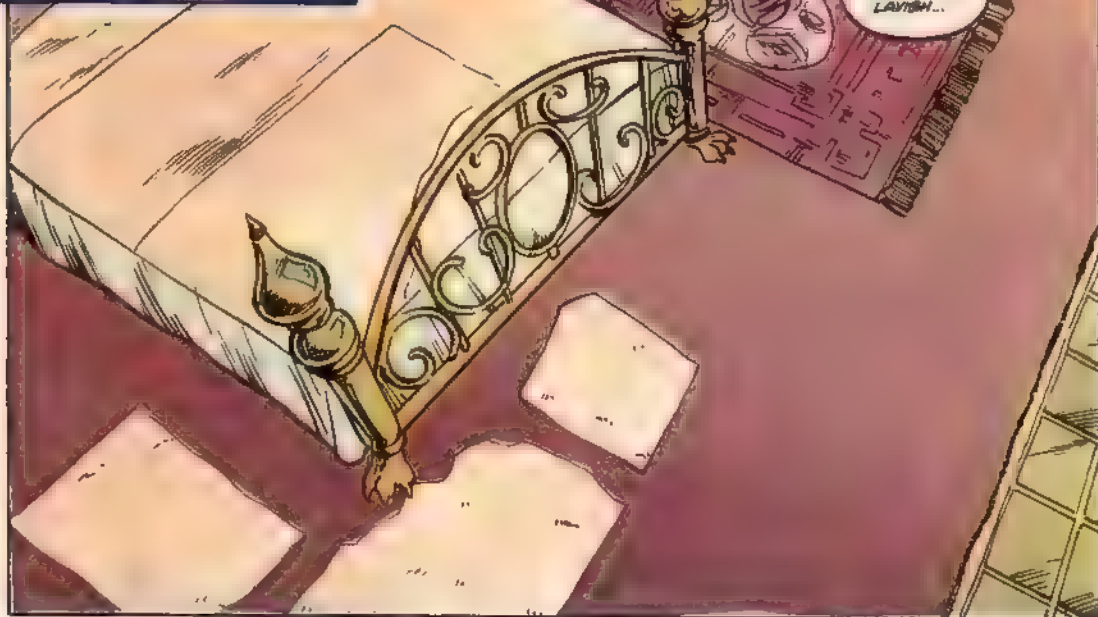
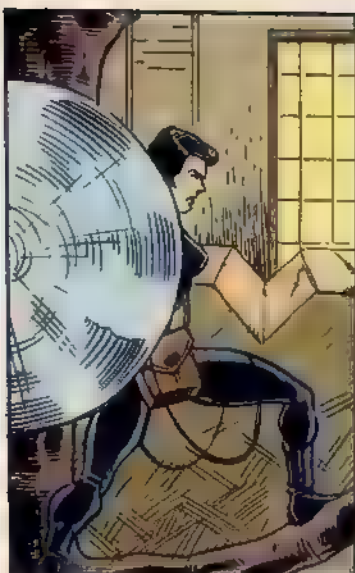


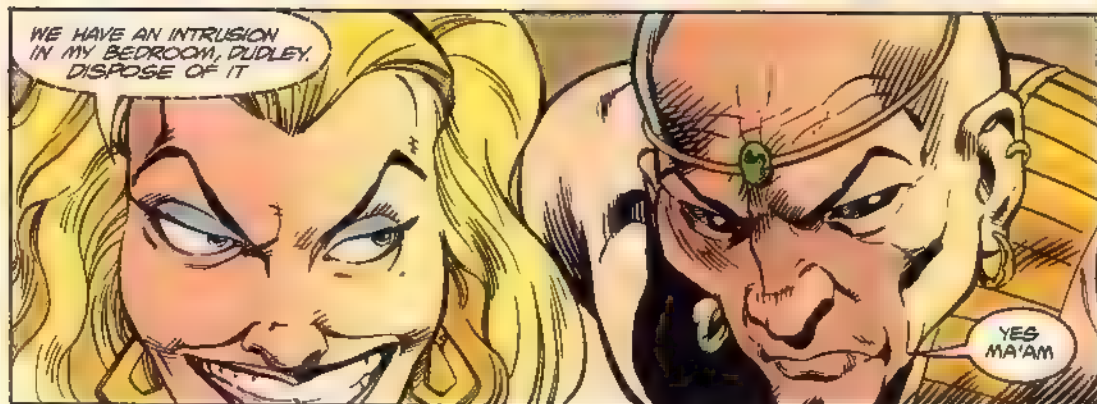
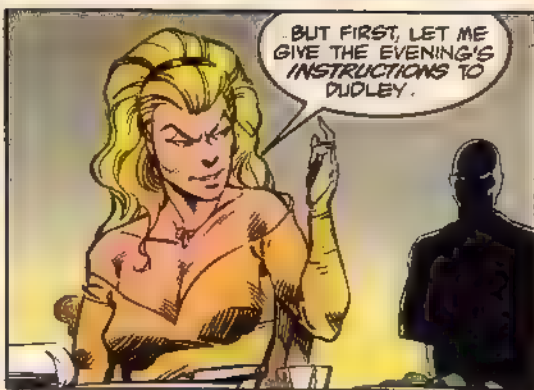
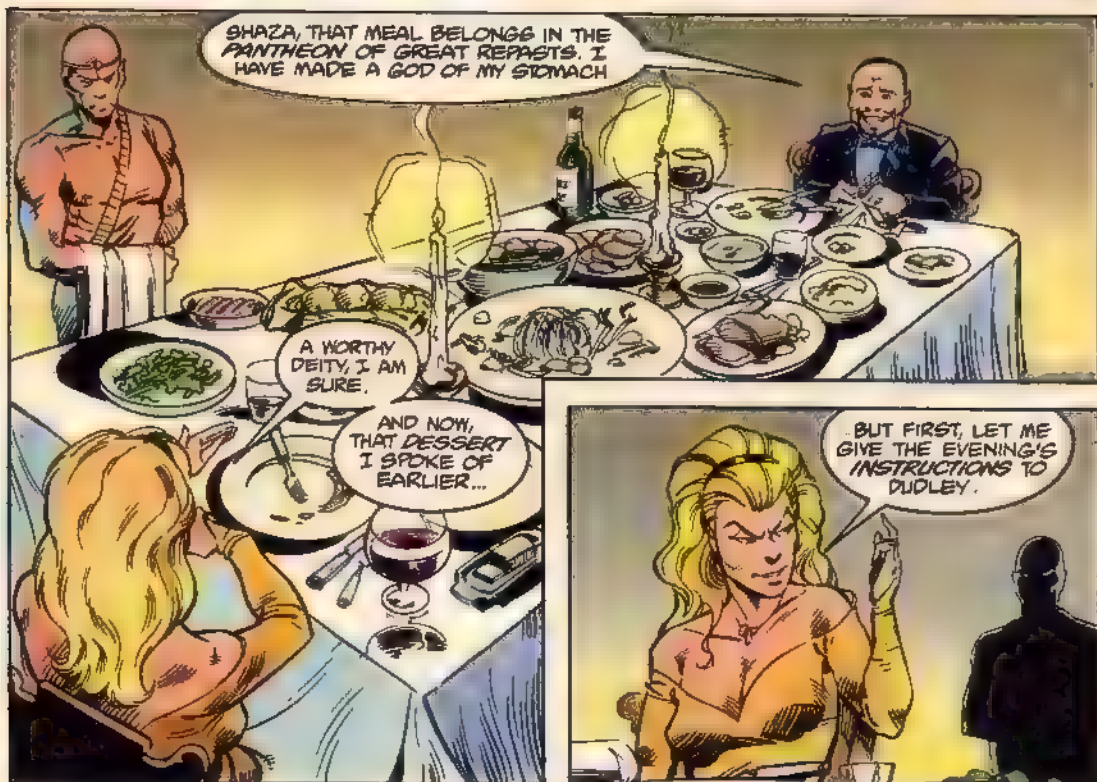
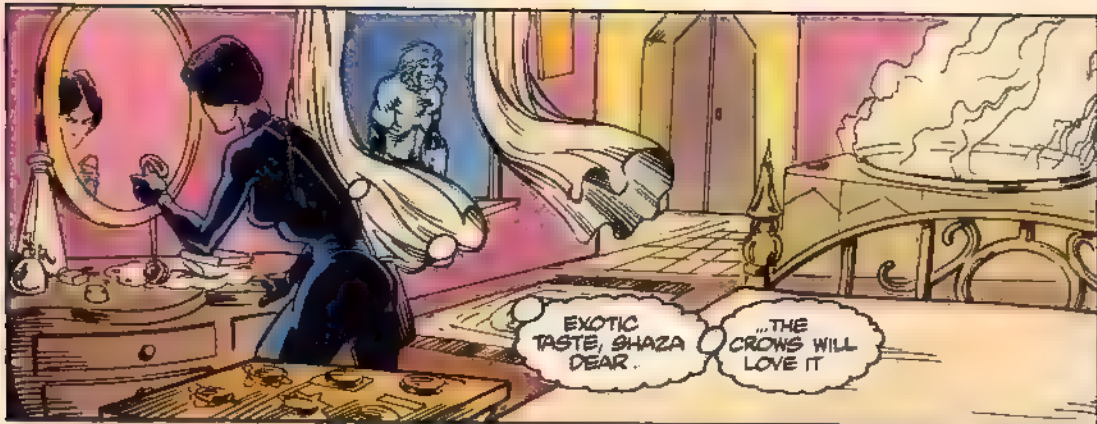
WLOMP



CRACK!







PERVERTSITY



Written by Mike Baron
Illustrated by Gary Chaloner

Badger woke with a king-sized headache. He felt as if he'd been run over by a semi and his mouth was filled with foul tasting residue. Then he remembered — he'd been eating bat guano sandwiches and baying at the moon. He sat up, pressed his palms to his throbbing temples and surveyed his surroundings. He was lying among a jumble of old tarps and engine parts in a corner of a darkened garage. Sunlight streamed in around the edges of the warped corrugated door.

It had been a long, ugly night marked by verbal exchanges and fisticuffs. The day wasn't shaping up any better. Badger rose gingerly and made his way toward the door. He hoped he could find his car.

The Corvette was parked on the yellow line on Gilman Street. A parking enforcement officer was writing Badger a ticket. "Excuse me, officer," Badger said. The young man looked at Badger with a mild curiosity which was hard to do because Badger was wearing his costume and mask, and was smeared with dried blood.

"Yeah?" the man asked. He had a moustache, as was required of all parking enforcement officers.

"I was just going to move it — I don't suppose you'd give me a break? It's only ten after seven."

The officer turned back to his ticket. "Parking law's in effect from seven a.m. until six p.m." He tore the ticket off with a flourish and tucked it under the Vette's wiper. "Anybody who can afford a car like this — a fifty-five dollar ticket won't break you."

"No," the Badger snarled, "but it might break you!" He seized the ticket writer at the crotch and neck and, as the man screamed,

raised him overhead and smashed him headlong into a stand of steel garbage cans. Parking enforcer and garbage sprawled profusely. Badger wadded the ticket and tossed it on the mess, got in his car and drove away.

A little voice in back of Badger's head said, "You idiot! The cops will be on you in two minutes." Bother.

Badger put the pedal to the metal and sliced down Monroe Street at fifty-five miles per hour, weaving around matronly hausfraus in Volvo station wagons containing children strapped to safety seats. The Volvo station wagons, with "Nuclear Free Zone" bumper stickers, positioned themselves side-by-side in two lanes and were scrupulous at staying ten miles under the thirty-five miles-per hour limit. Badger gnashed his teeth, laid on the horn and used his turn signals.

Soon he was on Seminole Highway heading south, trying to avoid strings of politically correct bicycle riders clad in cute little bicycle helmets with dentist utensil-like rear view mirrors, weaving across both lanes of traffic.

Everytime the cyclists passed a sign that said "Bicycle riders stay single file", they would laugh and flip it the bird. Badger had just passed County PK and was heading south when three riders just ahead fanned out across the road as if by some pre-arranged signal. He was forced to stand on the brakes. The riders rode three abreast, flitting like butterflies, wagging their fingers self-righteously at Badger and at the posted speed limit: forty miles per hour.

Badger blasted and blasted but they wouldn't get out of the way. They were daring him to run them off the road, but Badger

wouldn't do it -- because it wouldn't be fair. Badger always tried to be fair. He yanked the Vette over to the grassy shoulder and hit the road running.

The last bicyclist took one look over his shoulder at the frantically pumping Badger. "Holy..." he declared, accelerating in a burst of adrenalin. As he passed the others they looked back to see the Badger closing fast, a mere twenty feet back. They veered desperately into Seminole Forest, a holly-lolly bedroom community clinging to the south side of town like an overripe fruit. They peddled past large

neo-Edwardian houses with three car garages.

Now Badger was five feet from the last bicyclist, a thin young man with shoulder-length hair fastened in a pony-tail and a beard. The man

grunted and sobbed as he peddled. He had only wanted a morning excursion with his friends. He had only wanted to deny the right-of-way to a fascist pig in his Detroit death-mobile. He had only wanted to preserve the sacred holistic vegetarian tenets of Madison's self-righteous bicyclists who assumed that because they weren't polluting the atmosphere, they had the right to ride down one-way streets the wrong way and correct-the-thinking of whatever selfish car-driving swine that got in their way.

Now, this gentle soul was in the Badger's grasp, yanked off his eighteen hundred dollar Italian twelve-speed, with Badger inserting the his helmet-clad head into a flowerbed filled with nasturtiums.

"Say pal," Badger breathed into the man's little dentist mirror. "Cars have the right of way because they're bigger and stronger, capiche?"

The man gasped, choked, and struggled. "Help!" he cried. A woman opened the front door of the large white brick neo-Georgian home and shouted, "Get away from my flower bed! I'm calling the police!"

Badger waved at her. "Don't get your bowels in an uproar, lady! I was just saving you from this hippy drug dealer!" He held the hapless cyclist by the scruff of his neck, no mean feat as the cyclist was three inches taller than Badger. The bicyclists' two friends had stopped a hundred yards up the street

and were having a conference. Badger pointed at them with one hand, shaking his captive with the other.

"Look, ma'am! Hordes of long-haired cycle-riding drug dealers have come to invade your neighborhood and only I have the courage to act! Call the police, ma'am! Tell them that the Badger has apprehended part of a gang." The woman put her hand to her mouth, backed inside, and shut the door. Badger dropped the cyclist to the ground where the man lay anivelling.

"You wanker! I didn't hurt you. Have a nice day." Badger cut

between houses and sprinted across the common toward Seminole. But the cops had beaten him to it. Two police cars were waiting to bust him for rousting the parking enforcement

officer. Badger turned back into Seminole Forest and began trotting toward town. His work had just begun.

It was a hot day in June. Badger stripped off his mask and blood-spattered muscle shirt and jogged along the lakefront in loose-fitting cotton pants and black cotton slippers. By nine a.m. he'd reached the statue of a man abusing a cow, which had cost the city fifty thousand dollars and was meant to honor alternative lifestyles. The statue had caused an uproar when first proposed because the city council had gone to Greenwich Village for the sculptor instead of employing one of the many thousands of local artists scrabbling for existence amid various community art grants and fuzzy-minded government sops.

Two socialist skinheads were painting the sculpture. The male figure had been festooned with stars, stripes, and swastikas and had been labelled "U.S. CAPITALISM." The cow, done up in flags and faces of Africa, Asia, and Latin America, had been labelled "OPPRESSED THIRD WORLD PEOPLES."

"Nice," Badger said. "But I would have labelled the guy 'government' and the cow 'the people' and let it go at that."

A carload of radical lesbians pulled up, falsely assuming that the punks were gay bashers. The ensuing confrontation was music to Badger's ears. He threw back his head and burst into song.

"Look, ma'am! Hordes of long-haired cycle-riding drug dealers have come to invade your neighborhood and only I have the courage to act! Call the police, ma'am! Tell them that the Badger has apprehended part of a gang." The woman put her hand to her mouth, backed inside, and shut the door.

"On Wisconsin, on Wisconsin — fight on for your lake! Take the ball right down the hall —" Then he stopped, realizing that if he continued he would have to pay Paul McCartney a \$3.50 licensing fee. All this made him thirsty. At half past ten he found himself near the Square where a Chrysler LeBaron with a Bush/Quayle bumper sticker was parked on the yellow line outside the Senate Lounge on Left Blort Street. The interior was cool and dark and smelled of stale beer and cigars. There were three men at the bar not counting Jake the bartender who cast a baleful eye on Badger's sweat-slicked torso. "Out! No shirt, no service."

Badger sank into an Al Jolson stance. "Jake! Don't you know me, man!" Badger recognized a state senator, a lobbyist for a paper mill, and a lawyer named Barry who flew his own plane.

The bartender looked apprehensive. "Oh yeah... sure! My buddy! Here you go, pal — have one of mine." He slipped Badger a brand new Senate Lounge t-shirt which Badger slipped on, inhaling the scent of fresh cotton. One of the men at the bar shoved a hand in his face. "Senator Delmar Gutlap, Republican, Horicon." Gutlap had wavy hair and a florid complexion. "I sponsored a bill commending your actions in the roach-

wrangler affair. Sir, I salute the man who single-handedly saved Madison from being consumed by Illinois cockroaches!" Badger vigorously pumped Gutlap's hand.

"Thank you, Senator! Thank you! The honor is mine." Badger continued to pump as Gutlap tried to retrieve his hand. Badger fixed his gaze on the Senator's bloodshot eye. "Sir, I welcome this opportunity to meet with one of our great state's great legislators because there's a matter that's been bothering me." The lobbyist and lawyer looked on with amusement, enjoying their colleague's discomfort.

Gutlap jerked his hand free, nearly losing his balance. "And what might that be, young man?"

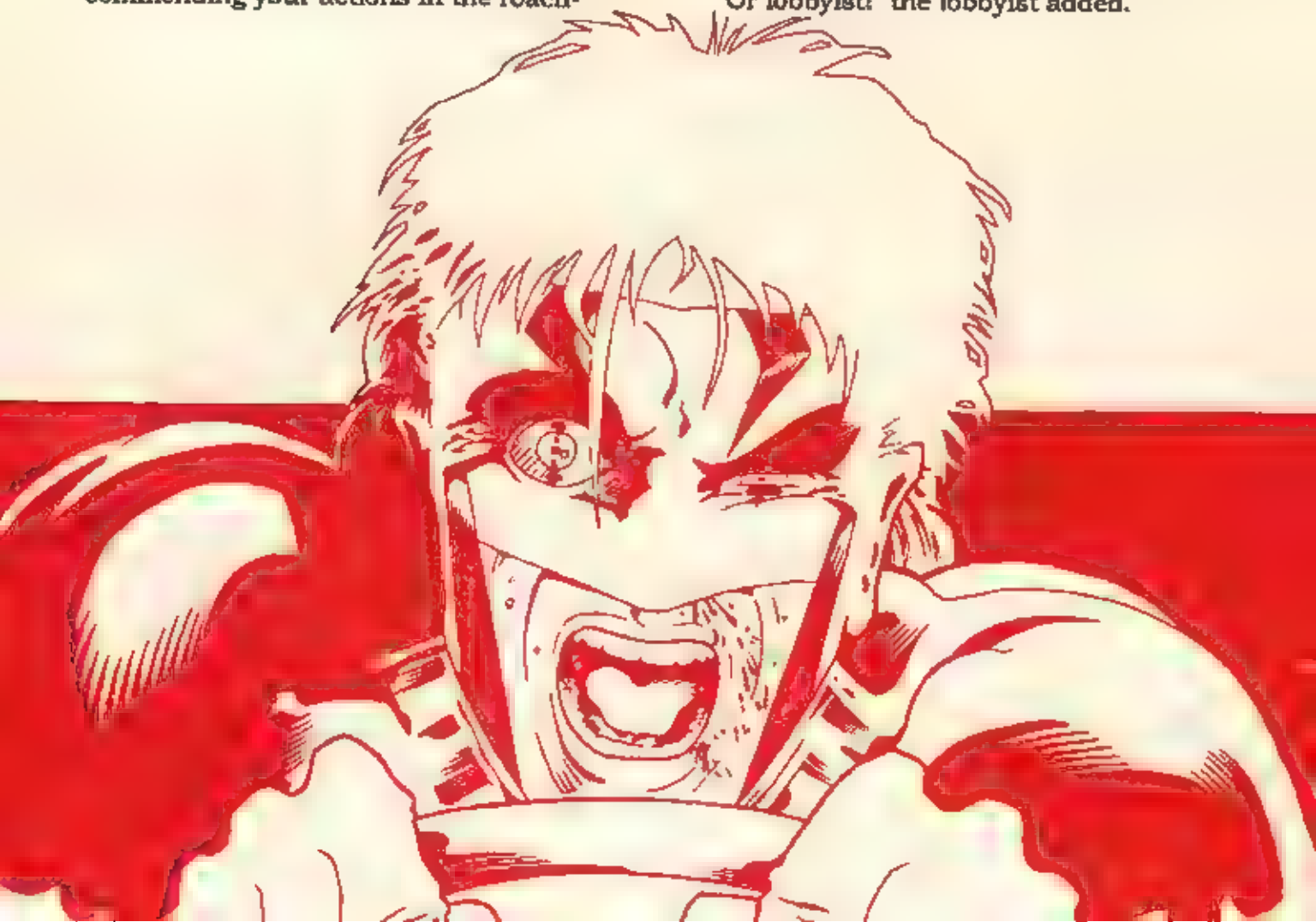
"It's that piece of crap Chrysler you've got parked on the yellow line outside. How come you get to do that, but I try to park my car there and I've got a SWAT squad up my ass?"

The lawyer Barry leaned forward, his polyester hair swirling madly about his head. "It's the slim-flam law."

Badger picked a bug out of the air and crushed it. "What law is that, Barry?"

"Briefly stated, it says that somebody's who connected to the local power structure, such as a lawyer or a state senator..."

"Or lobbyist!" the lobbyist added.



"Especially lobbyists can get away with all manner of peccadillos which would land the average citizen in serious trouble."

Jake passed out fresh glasses of Point. Badger drained his in a single draught and slammed the mug down on the bar with satisfaction. "I thought as much. It's enough to make a man enter politics. If you can't beat 'em, join 'em, that's what I say! Why, if I became a state legislator, I bet I could park my car any damn place I please! And I'd never have to go to court on a drunk driving conviction!"

Barry slapped Badger on the back. "You got it, pal! Of course," he added with a wink. "You have about as much chance getting elected out of this squishy-soft liberal district as I do! Get yourself a sex-change operation, recognize the PLO, move to the east side, and maybe you'd have a chance. Is that right, fellas? Fellas, am I right?" The senator, the lobbyist and the bartender all nodded their heads.

"Wait a minute," Gutlap said, studying Badger with interest. "Maybe that's not such a crazy idea. You're a veteran, aren't you?"

Badger held up a clenched fist. "Pork an 'A', Bubba."

"And," Gutlap continued, "he's got mental problems! What are you, a paranoid schizophrenic?"

"I suffer from multiple personality disorder

compounded by psychotic disassociation."

Gutlap wagged his fingers in dismissal. "Details. The main feature is your marketability as a representative of the chronically mentally ill and their sycophants, the students. They comprise a substantial voting block."

Barry rubbed his hands gleefully. "Senator, you may have something there! Our boy already had media exposure — hell, he's a hero! Look at the roach-wrangler thing! The costume, the name — it's perfect! Instant marketability! He even wears his hair long, and he's already strong on this animal rights thing. Anybody here have an interest in experimenting on animals? No? Good!"

Gutlap torched his cigar and blew fumes. "Tell me, son. You willing to help us get rid of that gang of nutcases at the Department of Natural Resources?"

The lobbyist leaned forward, eager to get in on the ground floor. "What about the state business climate? Let's lighten up on the industrial taxes and environmental restrictions, what do you say, hey?"

Badger backed away laughing. "You got me all wrong, fellas! Sure, a part of me wants to go for the death penalty, strict anti-abortion, and deregulation, but there's also a part of me that wants to turn all the means of production over to the people. Then there's a part of me that wants to introduce a drug



into the drinking water which would randomly sterilize ninety percent of both male and female populations. Then there's the part of me that wants to crack out the Uzi, the H&K, the AK 47, put on the old fatigues and have at it, y'know? Only I wouldn't choose a schoolyard — I'd choose the legislature while it's in session and really do something sweet and wonderful for this great state of ours. Give it a fresh start, y'know?

Gutlap was the first to back off. He wagged his finger and chuckled good-naturedly. "you certainly had us going there, pal. You turned the tables on ol' Delmar, slicker'n grease on a doorknob."

"I mean," Badger continued, "when you get a person to look at the sun as it bakes down on the daily carnage taking place on earth, the ridiculous accidents, the utter fragility of life, the powerlessness of those one thought most powerful — what comfort can you get from a psychotherapeutic point of view?!"

Barry glanced at his watch. "My feelings exactly. Whoops! Gotta run — I'm due in court in fifteen minutes."

Badger blew kisses at the departing lawyer. "Ciao! God love ya, Barry! Get some corporate sleazebag off the hook for me."

But it was not to be, for at the very moment Barry exited the Senate Lounge, a mass demonstration swept up the street snagging the lawyer by the sleeve of his Giorgio jacket, dragging him along.

There were students carrying placards demanding an end to racism, an end to war toys, and that the U.S. get off the Earth. There were militant feminists demanding laws forbidding men from exposing their chests in public. There was a militant pro-male activist demanding that women be fined for not putting out on a date. There were animal activists demanding a ban on all animal testing. Various historical revisionist societies demanded the removal of certain so-called "classics" such as *Huckleberry Finn* for its racial stereotyping. The Jewish fraternity fought with the black fraternity which fought with the WASP fraternities over who did what to whom during pledge week. The pro-lifers

bickered with the pro-choicers who were closely aligned with the Freedom From Religion Foundation. And beside and behind it all trudged a phalanx of bored cops

The demonstration roared by in a screaming mish-mash of passion. Badger was exhilarated. "Hellfire! It's great to see democracy in action!" He plunged into the river of free intellectual inquiry and found himself arm in arm with the militant feminists. "Get your worthless d--- from our

midst, brother," a friendly sister hissed. "We're only accepting a few token males at the end of the line." He slid back to where the Sylvanian Student Society carried a large banner demanding the U.S. stop all military aid to Israel and

The Sylvanian Student Society carried a large banner demanding the U.S. stop all military aid to Israel and immediately give every Sylvanian student a hundred thousand dollars, three acres of land and a mule.

immediately give every Sylvanian student a hundred thousand dollars, three acres of land and a mule. Badger clapped his hands in glee. "I didn't even know Madison had a foreign policy!"

"This part of the demonstration reserved exclusively for friends of Sylvania, infidel," said a youth in an Arab headdress.

"Wait a minute! Where's the Chronically, Mentally Ill Contingent?" Badger looked around but his view was obscured by signs and placards. He fought his way to the edge of the demonstration and caught the eye of a cop who recognized him.

"Hey Badger!" the cop shouted. "Come here — got a little matter I want to discuss with you."

Badger plunged back into the midst of the demo, accidentally brushing against a militant feminist who swung her placard at him with all her might. BONG! Badger stumbled forward into the midst of the Serbo-Croatian Human Rights Coalition, who shoved him along like a particle in an accelerator toward the front of the line. By now the demonstration had reached the bottom of the capitol steps.

At the very forefront were Students For A More Fairer Society who were protesting unreasonably high admission standards and the U.S. presence in Madison. Just as Badger was propelled forward among them, the leaders of the SMFS stopped stock still, slogans frozen in their throats. For there on

the top steps of the capitol, astride the very plywood podium SMFS had gone to great trouble to place, commanding the attention of all three local television stations, was a young man dressed like Elvis Costello holding a can of gasoline and a labrador puppy on a leash. He had his own bullhorn.

"In five minutes," he boomed to the news crews, "I will burn this puppy alive to protest U.S. military intervention in Libya!" A collective gasp rose from the crowd.

"What the hell does burning a puppy have to do with U.S. policy in Libya?" asked a hollisitc agrarian reformer. Members of the black student union clutching German shepherds on leather thongs marched to the front of the group. "Ain't gon' be no puppy burning today!" snarled the leader through his own bullhorn.

"Oh no?!" whined the young man. He stood at the top of the State Street entrance dousing the puppy with gasoline. He wore a white shirt and black jacket with skinny lapels and a narrow black tie. He had a bad case of acne and his voice cracked when he got excited. "Some of you fascist warmongers may think I'm doing this because I'm an insecure little turd who will do anything for attention, but that's not the case, I assure you! Three minutes!" The crowd surged forward. The war protester whipped out a lighter and flicked the flame inches from the puppy's whiskers.

Police fanned out at the head of the demonstration to prevent the various factions from rushing the war protester and tearing him to pieces, which would have done little to advance the cause of world peace. The news crews were tumescent with anticipation. The news director for the local alternative radio station spoke *sotto voce* into a tape recorder. "Of course, one might differ with his methods but certainly his heart's in the right place."

Badger had been momentarily forgotten. All eyes were on the protester as the seconds ticked down. It became apparent that the cops were just going to stand by until the man torched the puppy at which point they would arrest him for conduct-regardless-of-life. But Badger had other ideas. Clambering atop a news van, he swung into the branches of one of the large oaks ringing the square. Lost among the leaves, he swung Tarzan-like toward the capitol. It was nearly time. The deeply concerned young man pinned the whimpering puppy beneath his foot, pulling on the chain and lowering the flaming

lighter.

"For world peace!" he shouted. Badger swung out of the trees, striking the young man in the chest with both feet so the protester seemed to explode backward as if launched from a cannon. The puppy ran into the crowd. The news crews humped forward, the crowd surged against the thin line of police. Badger picked the war protester up and marched him back to the podium using a painful come-along. "Ow! Ow!" the young man cried. "He's killing me! Help! Police!"

"I'm not killing you," Badger protested, slamming the young man's head repeatedly into the plywood podium. "I just want to see a nice wood grain on your forehead."

The police, hurt by accusations of non-action and favoritism, rushed forward and arrested Badger. They threw him roughly to the ground, pinioned his arms, and began to read him his rights. He was so surprised he didn't even struggle. They were about to hustle him into a squad car when the leader of the Animal Rights Coalition, a tall woman with frizzy brown hair exploding from under a knit cap, mounted the podium and put bullhorn to lips.

"Badger just stopped that jerk from burning a puppy to death, and now the cops are going to arrest him. Are we going to let that happen?"

"NO!" the crowd roared, differences forgotten.

"Free the Badger — let him go!" the haystack bellowed. "We don't want your stinking war!" She fudged the pronunciation of "war" so that it rhymed with "go". The crowd roared back, "FREE THE BADGER, LET HIM GO! WE DONT YOUR STINKING WO!" The cops formed a nervous circle around Badger, who took up the chant with gusto. The crowd surged angrily forward. Someone threw a rock which smashed into the window of a news van. The chief-of-police, a tall, hirsute man who like to be photographed sipping wine and attending the theatre, came into the circle of officers holding Badger.

"Take the cuffs off him." The chief-of-police leaned close. "Okay, my friend. We're going to let you go this time, but I want you to get your ass out of town and stay out."

"What?!" Badger was incredulous. "Leave Madison?!"

FINI

Dear LARRY,:

C/O FIRST COMICS
435 N. LASALLE
CHICAGO IL
60610

Hey Larry,

Roger Salick did an outstanding job writing Badger #51.

My mind keeps thinking about Badger's threat on page 2. Yeah, there's this owner of a fast food restaurant that Badger could go visit.

She would be ripe for his justice.

Until Badger goes berserk in a Taco John's...

Melissa Page
236 New Salem Loop
Nortonville, KY 42442

My question is: If Badger went berserk in a Taco John's, who would notice?

Dear Roger, Ron, and Mike (and Larry),

Badger #51--Yeah! Back to knee-slapping humor and kick-ass martial arts action!

This one had everything--vicious one-liners, a mean mother demon, and perfectly choreographed fight scenes.

If this were a Marvel book, it would have had a "This one has it all" blurb on the cover in four inch red letters.

Then, if this were a Marvel book, Badger would be throwing uppercuts and roundhouses instead of backhand strikes and spinning back kicks; they never could get their kung fu right.

Roger Salick did a great job on the story. This is his funniest, most exciting script

to date.

I've always liked his back-up stories in various First books, now it looks like he's gonna finally start writing full-length stories. More power to ya, Rog! I'm really looking forward to your Sensel First Fiction series.

Looks like some excellent Badger stuff coming up in the next few months, what with Badger Goes Berserk and the regular Badger series.

Keep it coming Larrys! Or is that Larries? Or Larry's?

Larryly yours,

Jerry Smith
106 Bluffside Dr.
Covington, KY 41017

It's Larri.

Yo Mike,

Before Badger #51 I thought you were a sick puppy.

After seeing Roger Salick's treatment of Norbert, however, I see there are more than just the one singular sick pup residing in the pound.

And the promise made and kept concerning the knife was vintage Badger.

Matter of fact, the only downside to this outing was the unfortunate fact that it's Ron Lim's last issue on the artistic front. Ron's done an exceptional job with the visuals for this title and, for my money at least, he's the *ultimate* Badger artist. I'm

gonna miss his work.

See ya at Munden's.

Uncle Elvis
17650 Dawson Road
Dawson Springs, KY 42408

We're going to miss Ron Lim, too. But before making any decisions on the ultimate Badger artist, I suggest you check out Spyder's work in the Badger goes Berserk miniseries, as well as Tim Vigil's work in this issue.

Dear Larry,

Being a procrastinator, I always have something to say, but rarely get it written 'til the issue has become irrelevant.

I felt something had to be said this time, since I have started to write to Mr. Baron several times. I wondered if he was getting tired of this book, or perhaps spreading himself too thin with all the projects he has been working on. I had even considered (don't take this as an insult) that someone might be ghost-writing for him. I have heard of this being done.

The Badger has gone from being a three-dimensional to two-dimensional character, with too many silly animal stories. I can't tell you how happy it makes me to hear that Baron is taking Badger "back to his roots" and that there is going to be a more serious tone in the future.

"Before Badger #51 I thought Mike Baron was a sick puppy. After seeing Roger Salick's treatment of Norbert, however, I see there are more than just the one singular sick pup residing in the pound."

I was afraid that the forthcoming reprints might hurt you when the readers found out what a good storyline you had going in the first seven or so issues.

My congratulations to Mr. Salick. I hope the tone of the book continues in this vein, and that the humor is subtle and not strained. Mr. Salick's first issue was the funnest (I laughed out loud) I have read in years. Please continue in this direction.

Jerry Williams
St. Louis, Mo.

Jerry, as Roger's credit on the last few Badgers attests, we don't try to conceal the identity of the real writer of a particular story, though, we hasten to point out, this letter column is ghost-written.

Hey Larry,

Gee, Nick the Demon sure did hit it off well with Ham.

I thought he'd be moving into the castle! A cute and friendly demon just might boost sales.

Dr. Fate has a cute li'l demon. It looks like an acne-ridden dog and has a Yiddish accent. Excalibur has a cute chromium li'l baseball for a mascot. Maybe the Badger is too cute all by himself to need a mascot. Just a thought.

Full Contact was almost straight fight scenes. I bet Marvel will want to hire this Roger Salick guy right away. He does better fight scenes than any three Marvel hacks.

Talk to you again as soon as **Badger Goes Berserk** comes out.

Charlie Harris
2657 N. Mountain
Tucson, AZ 85719

Dear Larry,

I've gotten other First comics but never the **Badger**. I've heard of it and one day while looking at some comics, I saw it and got it. It was **Badger #51** and I really liked it.

I read Marvel a lot and most of my 467 comics are Marvel. My #1 hero is Wolverine.

I wrote to Marvel about the same thing I am writing to you about. Marvel has teamed up with DC already but I don't know if you have. Wolverine and Badger are alike in some ways.

Even though I don't know much about about Badger and I don't think he's a mutant, it would still be a good fight—especially with the claws he used in **Badger #51**. The X-men are considered by some people as criminals and if the Badger found out, he could try to exterminate them.

Please consider this and if so, you'll have a lifetime buyer.

Robert Peters
401 18th St.
W. C. , NJ 07087

We'll consider it. But our guess is Wolverine's chicken.

Gotta blow. Chow.

—Bob Garcia



Next Issue: Ham's new girlfriend asks him to make the ultimate sacrifice. By Roger Salick, Tim Vigil and Denis Rodler.



In Badger Goes Berserk #3: The root of Badger's psychosis revealed! By Mike Baron and John Beatty, Jeff Butler, Paul Fricke, Jay Geldhof, Flint Henry, Mark Nelson, Eric Shanower, Joe Staton, Spyder, Jill Thompson and Mike Zeck.